



Jacqueline Marque/The Patriot Ledger

A model shows proposed changes to the Ashdod fire station in Duxbury. The model was displayed at an open house Saturday.

Residents get a look at station plans

By John Chaffee
The Patriot Ledger

Duxbury

DUXBURY — Keith Fotta was among an estimated 150 residents who attended an open house in West Duxbury on Saturday to learn more about the proposed reopening of the Ashdod fire station.

"I think this is fantastic," Fotta said after viewing plans to renovate and expand the station. "It will be a real benefit to this end of town."

Fotta lives at 830 Franklin St., just up the road from the 30-year-old station, which was closed for budgetary reasons in 1989.

"There are a bunch of historic homes in this neighborhood, and they're more susceptible to fire," Fotta said.

"They'd go up just like that," he said, snapping his fingers.

Two years ago, a public safety study committee reported that it took fire trucks and ambulances based at the central fire station on Route 3A at least twice as long to respond to calls in West Duxbury as to other parts of town. The committee recommended reopening the Ashdod station.

Fire Chief William Harriman, aided by a reopening team of citizens and firefighters, proposed spending nearly \$600,000 to restore the aging Ashdod building, increase its capacity from two bays to three and add a full second floor.

A resident who refused to identify himself agreed there was a need to reopen the station but said he considered the estimated cost excessive.

The Ashdod renovations were designed at no cost to the town by former Selectman Abdul

Hamadeh, whose Quincy architectural firm, ASEC, specializes in fire station design.

Fire Chief Harriman said reopening the Ashdod station and staffing it with two firefighter/EMTs around the clock would make all of Duxbury safer, not only by reducing West Duxbury response times but also by making more personnel available to respond to emergencies anywhere in town.

Voters at the annual town meeting March 14 will be asked to allocate money to renovate, expand and reopen the station, and to increase the fire department's operating budget by nearly \$100,000 to pay for two additional firefighters.

If those requests are approved, the Ashdod station could be renovated and reopened by early next year, Harriman said.

"We need to get it done as soon as possible," he said.